

VZCZCXYZ0005
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBU #0006/01 0041110
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 041110Z JAN 07
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6896
INFO RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL//SCJ2//
RULGPIA/USCOMSOLANT

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 000006

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, I/GWHA, WHA, WHA/PDA, WHA/BSC,
WHA/EPSC
CDR USSOCOM FOR J-2 IAD/LAMA

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#)

SUBJECT: SADDAM HUSSEIN'S DEATH; LATIN AMERICA; DEATH OF PINOCHET;
UN REFORM; EVO MORALES IMPOSING A VISA ON US CITIZENS; TRI-BORDER
AREA; 01/03/07; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend papers cover the implications of Saddam Hussein's execution; the governments of Evo Morales and Hugo Chavez and their influence on violence in Latin America; the aftermath of Pinochet's death; and Bolivian President Evo Morales imposing a visa on US citizens who want to enter Bolivia. Left-of-center "Pagina 12" (12/31) carries an interview with a sociologist who speaks about the alleged role of the US media in "demonizing" the Tri-Border area. Daily-of-record "La Nacion" carries an editorial (01/02) urging the Bush administration to adopt "a more negotiating and conciliatory attitude" in order to find a solution in Iraq.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "Saddam's trial, a truly 'anti-Nuremberg' one"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, leading "Clarín's" international analyst, writes (12/30) "... Saddam Hussein was imprisoned in a US military base near the Baghdad airport. He was hanged because of one of his 'lesser' crimes - conviction similar to those imposed by him on 148 Shiites from Dujail in 1982.

"His major crimes, the massive killing of Kurds, the torture procedures implemented in prisons during his regime and other crimes will never see the light in any court. It is a real paradox that if Saddam had enjoyed minimal safeguards, his guilt would have come out even more clearly but was instead darkened by the procedure adopted.

"The US occupation and the Iraqi government under its protection may believe that (Saddam's) quick death is a victory to be exhibited within the framework of destruction, dissolution and fratricide war that they are unleashing. However, Saddam's execution is barely one more symbol of the political 'swamp' covering Iraq in 2006."

- "Saddam's execution freed him from another trial that could have troubled the US"

Nicolas Lantos, international columnist from centrist newspaper "Perfil" (12/31), writes "Saddam Hussein's death interrupted the Anfal case, in which the former dictator was charged with having used chemical weapons against the Kurds during the war on Iran.

"The trial, which started in August, was interrupted several times under unclear circumstances. If the trial had continued, Saddam's statements could have brought to the fore the role of the US in forming its unconventional arsenals. Saddam was also accused in another six cases."

- "A Western movie"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (12/30) "The Washington Post blamed the USG for the pressure wielded on Baghdad's authorities to execute (former) dictator Saddam Hussein."

"Neo-conservatives seem to believe that this lynching will twist the outcome of opinion polls now that Bush finds himself in an 'abyss' following his adventure in Iraq."

"Some voices in the Persian Gulf reasonably argued that this insane decision will bear a political cost within a framework of civil war and an unprecedented anti-US feeling, but that was only a whisper. What no one noticed is that this death will fuel the fire even further."

"... News networks were describing the details of the execution - big headlines, excited anchormen - everything resembled a bad-quality Western."

- "The distorted face of peace"

Daily-of-record "La Nación's" contributor Natalio Botana comments (12/31) "... Violence in Latin America is not so much the consequence of the influence of the new prophets of secular or religious fanaticism, but is rather related to the historical stage of societies which have not yet been able to establish the values of tolerance and genuine equality, sound public institutions and a working civilization to enjoy the common benefits of economic growth."

"... Last year's most disruptive figures were Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Evo Morales in Bolivia. The political fracture that they brought about is usually emphasized. However, what is not so frequently mentioned is the fact that those leaderships are based on

a strong need for social inclusion, which (as happens in Bolivia) has ethnic roots and prompts reaction in administrative departments or provinces.

"... If they have enough money to build a strong majority like that obtained by Chavez in recent presidential elections (over 60 percent), hegemonic regimes with objectives of being re-elected can easily be established that will block the opposition all the time."

- "The funeral of a tyrant"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" carries an op-ed story by writer Mario Vargas Llosa, stating (12/30) "... Most Chilean and international public opinion have already punished Pinochet and he will go down in history not for having been 'the general who saved Chile from Communism' but as the 'caudillo' of a tyranny who murdered at least 3,500 opponents, tortured and imprisoned many thousands, sent many others into exile and brutally ruled for 17 years a country that used to hold a tradition of lawfulness and exceptional democratic coexistence within Latin America..."

"... A country does not need to go through a dictatorship to modernize itself and reach welfare. The reforms implemented by a dictatorship always have a price to be paid in atrocities as well as ethical and civic consequences that are infinitely much more expensive than the status quo..."

"... Truly enough, all Latin American governments, except Cuba, have a legitimate origin, including that of Chavez, and also most leftist administrations respect democracy and cling to the rule of law. This is obviously positive."

"The problem is that democracy without economic development does not last long... Populism is an insurmountable obstacle to real progress even in countries blessed with oil, like Venezuela."

"I wish the tragic history of Allende and Pinochet does not repeat itself either in Chile or in any other country."

- "The UN reform"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" (01/02) carries an op-ed piece by Carlos Duguech, international columnist in Radio Universidad Tucuman, who says (01/02) "... As rules are now, even if 187 out of 192 UN members (more than 97 percent) vote for a UN reform, if the five permanent UN members (the US, France, the UK, China and Russia) do not unanimously agree, no UN reform will be possible... Therefore, a peaceful revolution is required and should be undertaken by the other 187 member-countries if they truly want to strengthen the UN. And those 187 countries should also be willing to grant the UN the required strength to accomplish its foundational objective, which is 'maintaining international peace and security.' Such would be innovative and very necessary steps to eradicate the despotism set by clauses and privileges. Undoubtedly, such despotism is the reason for the current deteriorated image of the world institution in spite of the fact that its performance on other fronts should be praised."

- "Bolivia imposes visas on Americans"

Pablo Stefanoni, leading "Clarín's" columnist, writes (01/02) "By implementing the typical reciprocity of diplomacy, President Evo Morales eliminated yesterday US citizens' rights to freely enter Bolivia. From now on, they will have to ask for a visa, just as the hundreds of Bolivians who regularly undergo this sometimes humiliating procedure..."

"As Morales made clear yesterday when signing the decree, it is almost a personal cause for him. Having been repeatedly accused by Washington for having ties with narco-trafficking for his condition of being a coca leader, the current president was able to set foot on the US only after becoming Bolivia's president. And Bolivian government officials usually have problems with their US visas. Alvaro García Linera himself had trouble with his own visa."

- "Tri-Border Area, the myth of a lawless land"

Mariana Carbajal, columnist of left-of-center "Página 12," carries an interview with a sociologist (12/31) "The Tri-Border is covered with suspicion. In fact, a few years ago, Puerto Iguazú, Foz de Iguazú and Ciudad del Este stopped being three border cities and make up now a 'dangerous' region."

"Two sociologists and researchers with CONICET (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas) (National Council on Scientific and Technological Research) were determined to find out

when and how this change took place. In an interview with Página 12, one of them, Verónica Giménez Beliveau, revealed the role of American media in starting demonizing the region'"

Giménez Beliveau commented: 'Starting in 2001, local circumstances such as the existence of an Arab community since the '70s and distant events as the September 11 attacks pair up. Then, the Tri-Border Area comes out as an area with its own characteristics, a lawless land escaping government controls and becoming the epitome of both gray areas' and threatening spaces within the new notion of the world as a global risk area.'

"'The discourse of the US media defeated those who claim there is an attempt to obtain possession of natural resources.'"

13. EDITORIALS

- 2007, a year of opportunities"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nacion" reads (01/02) "2007 has been rich in foreign political events that will inexorably mark the development of the 2007 agenda. The future of the war in Iraq, the evolution of oil prices, the consolidation of China and the US as the engine of global growth, the impact of Europe on the political change in France and the UK, the outcome of the Palestinian and Lebanese crises and their influence on peace in the Middle East, and, in our region, the future of Cuba without Fidel Castro are the central issues of the global scenario for 2007."

"Regarding the US military occupation of Iraq, the Bush

administration will have to temper its stance and adopt a more negotiating and conciliatory attitude to pave the way for a solution that will not only take into account the future of Iraq but also US ties with Iran."

- "Saddam's riddle"

Conservative "La Prensa" editorializes (01/03)"... The decision made by the USG and Baghdad's 'puppet' government to execute the imprisoned dictator was condemned by most countries. Pope Benedictus XVI highlighted that peace starts when life is honored...

"Perhaps, it would have been better to deliver the former president to The Hague's International Criminal Court, where many cases have been opened against tyrants... Democracy is the best response by men ever against the curse of tyranny... We expect that this century will witness this club of despots as an oddity from the past."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

WAYNE